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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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South Vietnam: [General Khanh has indicated that the armed forces intend to bear a major responsibility for future political stability and government effectiveness]

[Khanh, in two separate conversations with US officials, referred to plans to establish some formal organization to "engage" the military in responsibility for suggesting courses of governmental action. He described the proposed organization as a "censor" committee, operating formally under the premier but serving like an independent government branch on a par with the judiciary and the projected legislature.]

[He referred to the army and the Buddhists as the two "turbulent" forces in the country, and said the new organization would be composed of both military and religious representatives. He implied that the military could not be a direct participant in the government and be in a position to harness Buddhist political energies]

[Civilian authorities hope to forestall the creation of the proposed new organization by focusing attention on assembly elections, but there are reports that the generals have already won some Buddhist sympathy for the idea of a joint committee]

[Khanh told Deputy Ambassador Johnson that the communiqué announcing the government-military detente solved nothing by itself, but he denied that his aim was to regain personal political power]

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Panama: (President Robles' firm security measures and President Johnson's Canal announcement of 18 December helped avert trouble in Panama during the anniversary celebrations this past week end of last January's riots)

(First Vice President Marcel Penso has warned nonetheless that Robles has alienated several of the government coalition parties--including Penso's own Republican Party. The National Guard, he added, may not be adequate for future crises in Panama)

(Further anniversary celebrations are planned for 11 and 12 January. There is thus some continued risk of disturbances by extremist labor and student leaders despite preventive action by the government)

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